

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT CONCORD,

JUNE 6th 1799.

*No Sermon 1793
Pr of Smith — 1795
Dec. just before*

BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR,

THE

HONORABLE COUNCIL,

SENATE,

AND

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE

STATE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

By SETH PAYSON, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH AT RINDGE.

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1799.

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PREACHED AT CONCORD, JUNE 6th, 1799.



ECCLESIASTES, ix—18.

— : BUT ONE SINNER DESTROYETH MUCH GOOD.

THE tendency of our holy religion to promote order, good government, and social happiness is indisputable. To invalidate this proof of the divinity of the scriptures, we find the infidel pleading, that this excellent system of doctrines was doubtless the contrivance of some crafty politician to restrain, the otherwise ungovernable passions of the human heart. Let him enjoy his argument—still will we glory in a Revelation, which, while it opens the way to immortal bliss, affords the most important maxims of wisdom to direct our present conduct, and the most effectual restraints for the corrupt propensities of human nature. In his word, no less than by his providence, is Jehovah pleased to express a parental care for our happiness in this world. There we are taught the important lessons of industry, economy, and prudence, and warned against those ruinous paths to which youth and inexperience, as well as a wrong temper often expose us. The sacred volume is indeed a stranger to that machivalian policy, so necessary to promote the purposes of a lawless ambition; but in every sphere in which we can be called to act, he who wishes to unite dignity and usefulness, with a good conscience, may find in the scriptures a light to his feet, and a lamp to his paths. Copying after the model there prescribed, he will ever act honorably, he will compel respect, he cannot fail to be useful. Infinite wisdom

wisdom made use of the observing and penetrating genius of Solomon to communicate those ethical and political remarks, which more immediately relate to the economy of human life, and which so much abound in his writings.—Among these, the aphorism in the text leads to several observations not entirely foreign to the present occasion.—The object of the following discourse will be—

To illustrate the general observation in the text, that one sinner destroys much good.

AND, to attempt an answer to this question, which the subject naturally suggests, viz. whence wicked men derive their ability of destroying good, or doing mischief.

AGREEABLY to the proposed method let us

FIRST attend to the illustration of this truth, that one sinner destroys much good.

It is observable that no particular kind of good is here specified. We are left to apply the observation to every species of good which creatures can enjoy, and still it will be found a truth that one sinner destroys much good.—Sin is misery.—It is the bane of every thing which deserves the appellation of good ; and blasts every blessing, which the kind parent of the universe bestows upon his creatures.—It has expelled the morning stars of glory from their original heaven, and banished man from his primeval paradise. Of all the multiplied sorrows attendant on human life, sin is the fruitful source.—The celebrated Milton did not exhibit the creature of a poetical fancy, but a solemn truth, when he represented sin bringing forth death. But however general the observation, the inspired writer doubtless had some particular kind of good more specially in view ; and which, from the connection, appears to be political or national good.—The text stands in connection with this sentence, “wisdom is better than weapons of war ;” that is, wise and prudent measures often secure to a nation speedily, and honorably, without danger, and without expence, those blessings and privileges, which rash and foolish men plunge into all the horrors of war to obtain.—A truth happily illustrated, I conceive, by the conduct of our

Federal

Federal Government under the cruel injuries, and commercial depredations, both of England and France, wisdom is better than weapons of war ; this observation is immediately followed by the text ; but one sinner destroyeth much good ;—When in such national embarrassments the voice of wisdom is disregarded, and some rash counsellor prevails to hurry a nation into arms, we then have a glaring conviction of this truth, that one sinner destroyeth much good. Glory to him who still affords America his divine guidance and protection, that he has preserved us from following such pernicious counsels ; by many so strenuously advocated.

But granting that the inspired writer had a more particular reference to political good, which it appears he had, still, the unlimited nature of the expression was doubtless designed to teach us, that sin is destructive of every good.

Of this truth, the proofs are so numerous, that the only task is to select those which are calculated to impress the mind with the deepest conviction.—Every page in the history of man is a comment on the text, and the experience of every day affords a new confirmation of its truth.

WHAT ruin does the sinner bring upon himself ? "He who doeth this destroyeth his own soul, is the language of inspiration." Such is the nature and faculties of the human soul, its vast susceptibility both of pleasure and suffering, its amazing activity, and growing capacities, its high destination, and endless existence, that its importance exceeds all calculation.—The enjoyment, or the sufferings of a kingdom, and indeed of the whole human race, as it respects the present life, cannot be compared with what each individual soul in the whole duration of its existence, will either enjoy in the possession of the Supreme Good, or suffer under the tokens of his displeasure. He who rebels against his maker—hardens his heart in impenitency, and rejects the offers of reconciliation and peace, destroys his own soul, and with it, all that good which he is capacitated to receive in the enjoyment of his Maker. The mind under the influence of a wicked temper

temper is no less incapacitated for happiness, than the blind of enjoying the pleasures of sight ; or the deaf of receiving entertainment from the harmony of sounds.

BUT these considerations, substantiated as they are by the declarations of eternal truth, are no proofs of the point in the view of the unbeliever.—He regards them as the dreams of enthusiasm, and demands evidence of which he can feel the force.—Such evidence there is in a melancholy abundance as will convince him, if he is not as destitute of reason as he is of faith.

WHEN we see the slave of avarice, or ambition, destroying the comfort of life to hoard useless wealth, and acquire an empty name ; or the prodigal, wasting his goods and destroying his health in riotous living. When we look into families where boisterous passion reigns, and drives far away peace and domestic comfort—or into families where the vicious courses of a parent has introduced poverty and distress, and entailed diseases on his posterity, how naturally do such scenes evidence the propriety of the wise man's observation, that one sinner, &c.—Whence flow the tears of the weeping penitent but from a reflection on the far greater good he might have enjoyed himself, and been instrumental of to others, had he not harkened to the allurements of folly? and oft at the gloomy close of a guilty life has the sinner himself been compelled, by the torturing reflections of his own mind to acknowledge, that the ways of transgressors are hard. As we raise our views to the higher scenes of life, we find, as men became possessed of power, or are distinguished for their abilities, their capacities for doing mischief are proportionably increased. How often do we find the heavy calamities which fell an antient Israel attributed to the corrupting influence of Jeroboam and Ahab ? When we trace the victories of an Alexander, and the ambition of a Cæsar, or take a view of the more modern lives of Louis XIV, or the celebrated Prussian Frederick, we find the groans of enslaved millions, of depopulated kingdoms, and nations bleeding at a thousand wounds attesting the truth of the
text,

text, and witnessing the calamities which a lawless ambition pours on the human race. What seeds of misery did Mahomet bring from his cell, when he came forth a pretended prophet of the Most High, to propagate by fire and sword his fabulous revelation? Of what incalculable mischiefs was Loyola the author when he invented the celebrated order of the Jesuits, which, for so many years were the disturbers of the peace, and corruptors of the morals of mankind? And judging from what has already taken place, may we not predict still greater evils from the jesuitical author of the present existing order of the Illuminati. —An order professedly founded on Atheism, at war with every religious principle and moral sentiment, and with every Government which refuses submission to its influence. But it is needless to recur to particular instances, which might be multiplied without number. What is the history of mankind but pages of mourning, of lamentation and woe; scenes of tyranny, oppression, carnage and destruction, the natural fruit of the unrestrained lusts of the human heart?

It may be proper however to observe here, that no less destructive is the poison which has flowed from the pens of those who have endeavored by their publications to promote vice and irreligion. The writings of a Shaftsbury, a Volney, a Voltaire, a Chesterfield, and a Paine, among many others, will be considered as proofs of this truth by all who believe that virtue and piety are the basis of happiness.

It will also doubtless be expected, that so convincing an instance of the pernicious tendency of corrupt principles and practices as the French nation has exhibited in their late revolution, will not be passed in silence. This instance is indeed perfectly in point; but the speaker must beg leave to refer the application of it to your private reflections; as time, and abilities would both fail him in the attempt to describe such surpassing scenes of horror. Scenes, in which every principle both of natural and revealed religion, every moral sentiment, and dictate of humanity have been prostrated in the dust; and in which every effort of that wis-

dom, which the Apostle characterizes as earthly, sensual, and devilish has been exerted to obtain universal domination, and to rivet heavier chains on those whom she had lulled into security with promises of freedom. Happy will be America, if the injuries which we have received, do but teach us to avoid her crimes, to escape her destructive policy, and to cherish those virtuous sentiments, the annihilation of which in France, has rendered her wretched in herself, and a scourge to mankind. But some may ask with surprize, can France, surrounded with a train of victories ; be wretched ! Yes, if the detestation of the good and virtuous part of mankind, if a most unjust and tyrannical government, if religious persecution, a ruined commerce, and exhausted finances, if a boundless ambition, if robbery and injustice in their blackest forms, or the blood of innocent millions crying for vengeance, if these things can make a nation wretched, then is France wretched—and if we draw just conclusions from the sacred volume, what she has already suffered will be but the beginning of sorrows.

AND wretched every nation must be where similar principles prevail. With as much reason may it be asserted, that poison may be taken without danger, and that fevers and consumptions have no tendency to effect the dissolution of the body, as, that the prevalence of wickedness is not destructive to the body politic.—Indeed the most mortal diseases may be lingering, and poison may not produce immediate death ; so those corruptions which sap the foundations of national existence may be gradual in their operation—internal strength or weakness of constitution, and many foreign considerations, may either retard or accelerate the final catastrophe, and the ablest State physicians may be disappointed in prognosticating the particular period of its dissolution ; but, that national wickedness tends to, and persisted in will produce national ruin, is as sure as the truth of history, as the truth of revelation.

THE tendency of national wickedness to the destruction of national good, may be inferred—from the natural constitution and tendency of things—and from the
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the moral perfections of the Supremé Governor, as exhibited in his word.

FIRST, this event results from the natural constitution, and tendency of things—the progress of wickedness, and its connection with the ruin of the people among whom it prevails, may be easily traced. We find, that in proportion as the principles of religion and morality are weakened, those lusts and passions, which are so prevalent in the human heart come into operation. Vice begins to lay aside her mask, and come forward with open face. The humble domestic virtues are despised, and plainness and simplicity of manners become the objects of ridicule. In consequence of this depraved taste the youthful mind is suffered to grow up, unformed by instruction, unrestrained by discipline ; or instructed only to aim at frivolous and showy accomplishments. A generation rises up which “fears not God, nor regards man ; self-willed are they, and not afraid to speak evil of dignities.” The social feelings give place to selfishness, envy, and emulation ; an emulation to excel, not in substantial virtues, but in titles, in wealth, and splendid appearance. Every thing now yields to a rage for show and parade ; and honest industry fails to supply the waste of prodigality. The next consequence is, that public taxes, however reasonable or necessary, become a ground of complaint, and every expence, which is not devoted to luxury is submitted to with reluctance. Extortion, oppression, and all the tricks of fraud and knavish speculation are resorted to, for a supply to the demands of extravagance. Bribery and corruption are of course introduced—justice becomes venal—the most important interests of the public, are compeled to give way to private and selfish views—and pretended patriots become as numerous, as real ones are rare ; that is, persons who are seeking public favor and emolument, under the covert of a pretended zeal for the public good. This is the proper crisis for ambitious men to promote parties and factions, to mislead the unwary multitude, and to turn the tide of public odium against those virtuous few, who are the remaining props of a sinking State. And this is the time

time for any foreign enemy, by the secret influence of bribery, by supporting internal enemies, and dividing and distracting the Counsels of a nation, to effect that, which the most powerful armaments, in a virtuous state of society would have attempted in vain. This is the progress, and evident tendency of vice; and by this progress it has overturned Empires and States deemed unconquerable. The efforts by which the small republics of Athens and Sparta withstood, and finally defeated, the almost incredible armaments of Darius and Xerxes, are instances never to be forgotten, of the irresistible force which republican virtues give to a nation. And the sequel of the Grecian history affords an equally memorable proof of the fatal effects of a prevailing thirst for gold, and the enfeebling influence of luxury and dissipated manners. The Persians had long found them invincible in arms, they at length applied their gold and silver to obtain partisans, and promote divisions among them. By these weapons they succeeded. The heroic virtues displayed at Marathon, and the straits of Thermopylae, were found no more in Greece. Their Councils became divided, every measure of defence was weakened, if not entirely defeated, and those arms, which had been so successfully employed against their enemies, were turned upon themselves.

As a further evidence of the tendency of sinful practices to destroy national good; we may ask, why is not America quiet and happy? In the enjoyment of every privilege and blessing which any human government can bestow, surrounded with the rich bounties of an indulgent providence, and possessing resources, which, properly applied, would leave us nothing to fear from the united powers of Europe, yet why, in such circumstances of security, are we filled with continual alarms? Why are men of the most approved wisdom and fidelity, men who have been firm to their country's cause in her most trying scenes, and whom we have justly acknowledged as our political saviours, yet, why are these men, without the least apparent cause, held up as objects of suspicion; and every art used to fill the minds of the citizens with

with groundless jealousies ? Why is every measure of our Federal Government, though evidently marked with wisdom, and especially every measure calculated for our defence, the object of censure ? Why in particular cannot a dangerous alien be required to depart, nor a seditious citizen punished, who has been convicted of having invented and propagated known falsehoods, with a design to injure the government, and raise a prejudice against its officers, but immediately a cry of unconstitutional oppression is sounded through the Union ? And still more to astonish us, we find those very persons who have such a refined sense of the liberties of the subject, and such a jealous concern for the freedom of mankind, approving in the gross all the measures of the French Government—even of that most arbitrary act of oppression which drove her worthiest, and most honorable citizens into banishment, without the form of a trial—and of that, which compels every citizen to open his doors to customers on the christian Sabbath, however disposed he may be to spend the sacred hours in devotion. And why, we may further ask, are the greatest exertions of the yet firm friends of America, necessary to prevent her from flying, like a fascinated bird, into the ravenous maw of that monster, which has already devoured so many nations, whom she had first deceived with her wiles ?—These are questions which any one can answer ; and they lead to the sentiment expressed in the text, that one sinner destroyeth much good.

SECONDLY, from the moral perfections of the Supreme Ruler, as exhibited in his word, no less than from the evident tendency of things, we are assured, that national iniquities are connected with national ruin, and therefore, that he who is instrumental in corrupting the morals of a nation, is a sinner who destroys much good. As societies do not exist, as such, in a future state, it seems reasonable in this view to expect, that God in his righteous providence will reward, or punish nations here, with a degree of exactness, which, we are not to expect will take place with respect to individuals, in this present life. This idea is fully confirmed by the account the sacred history has transmitted

ted to us of the divine dispensations towards the Jews, and other nations. Even the chosen people of God, could not obtain possession of the promised land, until the inhabitants had filled the measure of their iniquities ; but when in the judgment of infinite wisdom, it became necessary to make them a public example, in vain they looked for safety to their chariots of iron, or their cities walled to heaven. The same divine impartiality, and moral rectitude appears in his conduct towards his favored Israel ; when they forgot his benefits, and forsook their God, they fell an easy prey to every invader, but when by unfeigned repentance they sought his favor, again they were blessed with his indulgent smiles. But it is needless to multiply particular instances, for Jehovah has published the following as the fixed universal rule of his government, that "when I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it shall do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." From this principle, that national guilt is connected with national misery, the inference is plain, that the sinner is virtually the enemy of his country, and a destroyer of its good. In this view we find both Achan, and Ahab denounced, the troublers of Israel. The sinner is eminently a troubler of Israel when he is a person in authority, and entrusted with the important interests of a people. The wise advice of Jethro to Moses was, to select for his copartners in government, not only able men, but such as feared God, men of truth, and hating covetousness ; such only will prove truly blessings to their country. One of the important advantages resulting from the study of history is, the striking view it gives of the dangerous consequences of entrusting men with power, who are destitute of any fixed principle of morality and religion. As far as a regard to interest and reputation will stimulate, we may expect a degree of fidelity ; but in those critical and trying periods, when, to be faithful to his trust, would probably deprive him of an honorable post, injure his worldly interest, or draw upon him the odium of the public, what, in such

such circumstances, can induce a magistrate, who fears not God, has no respect to the rights of conscience, nor feels the powers of the world to come, to be faithful to his country's cause? And besides, the examples of unprincipled men will be more or less contaminating. Their immoral feelings, and their contempt of those institutions, which are the great supports of religion, will unavoidably influence their conduct; and we need not be told how powerfully the examples of exalted characters, and especially their bad examples operate on the public mind.

BUT perhaps the sinner will consider the text as compliment to his abilities, and be pleased with the idea, that he is capable of destroying so much good: for most men consider great capacities as more honorary than a good heart; and do mischief, merely to raise themselves into consequence; as he who burned the temple of Diana to perpetuate his name.—Whether a capacity to do mischief is so honorable as some imagine, will appear in the consideration of a question which arises from the subject, and to which the proposed method leads us,

SECONDLY, to attend, viz. Whence sinners derive their ability of destroying good. The success of the evil doer is no evidence of his abilities; but results from the excellent nature of good—and the various means and instruments of mischief which this imperfect state affords.

FIRST. The excellent nature of good, and the delicacy of its constitution renders it very liable to injury.—All good depends on the existence of certain proportions, and exact relations, and which must be kept compleat, or the good they produce is at an end. To destroy good is but to derange that order, or alter that nice proportion; to stop a wheel, or to draw a pin.—What a trifling cause may disorder that amazing display of wisdom, the human frame.—A spark, which a child may communicate, may destroy what the most ingenious artists have been years in erecting. And we are not insensible what disturbances, very contemptible agents have been able to produce both in this, and other nations.—Hence, to do good, is infinitely

initely more excellent, and requires unspeakably greater abilities than to do mischief. Good, can result only from proportionate power, wisdom, and benevolence ; but ignorance, or malice, with a small degree of power, may destroy much good.

SECONDLY. It is further observable, that in this imperfect state the means of doing good are few, and the difficulties to be overcome are great, whereas, the ignorance, the weakness, and wickedness of mankind, afford innumerable ready instruments to the workers of iniquity.—The way of doing good, like the way of salvation is strait and narrow.—Much patience, fortitude, and perseverance are necessary.—We must expect to encounter the prejudices, the passions, and ignorance of mankind—we shall find but few to assist, but many to oppose and counteract us.

But he who is set on doing mischief has both wind and tide. No scruples usually restrain such men from using any means which will best promote their designs. Falshood, and all the base arts of deception are their common weapons. The evil doer will embrace you as a friend that he may better direct the fatal dagger to your heart, and appear as an Angel of Light, to give the surer success to his infernal purposes. Instruments of mischief are easily found. The prejudices, the lusts, and passions of men, all which strongly oppose him who wishes to promote any good design, lend their willing aid to the workers of iniquity. For instance, is the sinner aiming to blast the reputation of his neighbor ? He can scarce invent any thing so absurd, or notoriously false, but he will find many eager to hear, and as eager to propagate, and to give credibility to the scandal. Or is he disposed to foment divisions in Church or State ? In one he meets with a restless factious spirit, whose soul is an enemy to peace.—In another he finds a man of a ruined fortune who pants for revolutions, and public disturbances, in which he can lose nothing, but may gain much. A third, according to his wishes, is already looking up with a mixture of envy and ambition, to those possessing stations of dignity, of which his vanity tells him he alone is worthy. And a large multitude

multitude, who, through want of information lie open to all the arts of deception. These, and many similar characters, which exist in every society, are the ready instruments of the evil doer, and willingly join their forces to promote his pernicious designs. Therefore, that wicked men of weak capacities are capable of doing much mischief, is no just ground of exultation to them, nor of surprise to others.

THIS view is calculated to excite caution in those who wish to counteract their devices.

THE works of evil-doers are works of darkness. They often obtain their ends by arts too secret to be seen, and too abominable to be suspected.—Hence, good men have oftener been foiled by the arts, than by the arms of their enemies. Inexperienced themselves in fraud, it is not easy for them to believe, what they are often compelled, when too late, to acknowledge for truth.

THE virtuous Swiss could not believe that the French Government had no regard to treaties ; nor could the King of Naples credit the idea, that the officers of his army were in the pay of the Directory. And who in America could have credited a few years past, what is now abundantly substantiated, that, while France apparently espoused our interests with so much warmth, its real objects were, not simply the humiliation of her hated rival, but to reduce America itself to a state of dependance, more abject than that from which she pretended to raise it. That, their utmost policy was exerted to exhaust all our resources by continuing the war ; or otherwise to have subjected us to terms of peace far more disadvantageous, than our professed enemies themselves would have imposed. Such arts are usual weapons of evil-doers, and against these weapons a wakeful caution is a necessary shield. It is far from the object of these remarks to introduce a spirit of jealousy into society ; a spirit productive of none of those advantages some attribute to it, but generating endless tumults and disorders, feuds and insurrections. There is however another extreme, a supine negligence, an incredible confidence, which is at no time a real virtue,

and is often found a dangerous weakness. To suspect those who merit our confidence, is hateful jealousy; to repose confidence in one who has evidenced a disposition to betray and injure us, is certainly a weakness. The countenance given to those whose principles and practices are notoriously unfriendly to the interests of America, and the backwardness of many to contribute to the necessary means of defence, even while they acknowledge the danger which threatens their country, indicate, that we need to be more deeply impressed with the dangers which surround us, and more attentive to this truth, that one sinner may destroy much good.

THE addresses, which the occasion dictates, will now close the subject.—In the first place, I would beg leave to address myself to your Excellency, whom the free, and general suffrages of your fellow-citizens, have again called to the first office in the State. Possessed with sentiments of sincere esteem for your personal virtues, with a grateful sense of the important services you have already rendered your country, and venerating your official character as the minister of high heaven, and the representative of the Supreme Ruler, I cannot in this address be guilty of intentional rudeness; but ill should I discharge the duties of this day, were I to substitute flattering titles, for those solemn truths, the occasion is calculated to inspire.

You will, therefore, permit me sir, to remark, that proportionate to the dignities, are the duties of your exalted station. Power, and authority are perverted talents, when they are not exercised in doing good. In the expressive language of the poet.

“Heaven’s favors here are trials, not rewards;”

“A call to duty, not release from care.”

O SIR, you will not forget that He who has appointed us our respective stations, and has furnished us with capacities and opportunities for doing good, observes our conduct; that at his impartial tribunal we must render our final account, and receive according to our works. You will not be unmindful of the solemn trust with which you are invested; while the most important concerns of your country, the interests

terests of religion, and all that is dear to man are committed to your care, in connection with the other guardians of the State, and at a period so interesting as the present, when the powers of darkness are exerting all their subtilty to involve this happy country, this asylum of religion and liberty, in ruin; and when the danger is so much increased by the unhappy prevalence of a jealous disorganizing spirit, which has infected not individuals only, but too visibly appears in our public councils. To do good is as laborious, as it is easy to destroy it. Weighty are the cares of Government when their importance is felt. No small degree of self denial is necessary to encounter the prejudices and passions of mankind. But how animating the reflection, that our Glorious Master beholds with an eye of approbation the trials and conflicts of those, who are faithfully endeavoring to do good, and that his rich rewards are the blessings of an approving conscience, and crowns of immortal bliss. Animated and supported by these views, still may it be your Excellency's highest honor to do good. As a benefactor of your country, may you long live in the grateful feelings of Americans; and at some far distant period, possess the more substantial rewards which await the friends and benefactors of mankind.

To the honorable Council, the honorable Senate, and House of Representatives, would I also beg leave to present respectful addresses, and cordial congratulations on this pleasing occasion. To promote the growing greatness of your happy country, to lead her in the paths of peace, to protect her important rights, and counteract the devices of her enemies, is the arduous, but honorable task to which you, our political fathers are now called. If the observations which have been made are productive of the effects most earnestly desired by the speaker, you will enter on those important services with minds penetrated with these sentiments—that sin is misery—that religion is the source, and security of all human blessings—and that laws are but weak restraints, where the fear of God, and the moral sense of right and duty have ceased to exist. Under this view you will labor by your private influence and
example

example, no less than by your official transactions to encourage virtue, and to discountenance vice and immorality.

MORE effectually to counteract the devices of evil doers, the importance of united Councils is obvious. The present, is one of those interesting periods, when a sense of common danger tends to draw to a closer union the real friends of their country. May these sentiments be fervently cherished, and all local prejudices, and party views be made to yield to the common interest.

RELIGION has become, if possible, of increased importance to Americans, in consequence of an uncommon connection between our political and religious interests. Our enemies are evidently seeking the destruction of our civil privileges, by undermining their surest defence, our religious and moral systems. This fortress taken, we fall their prey without resistance. To advance the interests of religion and virtue, and as a direct means thereto, to promote useful knowledge, and moral instruction, we flatter ourselves will be a leading object in your deliberations.

ON the preparations for this occasion, it has been my fixed purpose, to avoid the arrogance of appearing to dictate to the superior wisdom of this venerable body, the political measures proper to be pursued. I cannot however, leave this place, with a mind free from guilt, should I neglect to beg your attention to the existing act of this State for the observance of the christian sabbath. I shall not pretend to enter into the merits of the question, whether the civil authority can properly give their legislative support to an institution, which has been justly considered, not only as the great palladium of religion, but as contributing, in a variety of ways, to promote the civil interests of mankind; and as particularly favorable for communicating moral instruction to the public mind. The existence of the act is a proof, that the interference of government was considered as proper. But if any interference was proper, why not an effectual one? The act referred to, is manifestly loaded with embarrassments, apparently designed to prevent its

its efficacy. Whether an act of this nature, is more injurious, or beneficial I shall not pretend to determine ; but it is devoutly to be wished, that the governments of a christian country would appear as engaged to support the christian sabbath, as the government of France is to support the honors of their decadi. The call of duty is obeyed, and your wisdom must decide. Feeling the dependance of all created nature on its glorious author, you will seek, and I pray that you may receive, instruction from the great fountain of light.

A few observations to this numerous assembly will conclude this discourse.

FATHERS, BRETHREN AND FELLOW CITIZENS,

WITH pleasure we recognize on this joyful occasion, this great leading principle both in our State and Federal Government, that the source of power is the people. This day brings into view the pleasing truth, that we are still in the full, and undisturbed possession of the important privilege of choosing to whom, among many worthy citizens, we will commit our most precious political interests. You now see before you those venerable characters to whose superior wisdom, information and patriotism you have committed the weighty concerns of government.— Let me ask ! are they not men in whom you can confide ? men of known wisdom, and approved fidelity ? men of your own choice ? Let them then have your confidence ; and cordially and firmly unite with them in maintaining the authority of the laws, and the inviolability of the constitution. As we would exhibit a character becoming men and christians, and approve ourselves capable of enjoying the blessings of a rational freedom, let us fixedly discountenance a practice, which has unhappily become too prevalent, of speaking evil of dignities, of indulging groundless suspicions of our rulers, and criminating, with unbounded licentiousness, the measures of Government. A practice as unreasonable and wicked, as it is ruinous and destructive. Our enemies have discovered this weakness, and have made it their principal point of attack,

attack, to separate us from our Government, and to destroy our confidence in those exalted characters, whose faithful exertions in the cause of their country, have justly rendered them the admiration of the world. It is of no small importance to Americans to distinguish their real from their pretended friends. In a political, no less than a religious sense, does the divine caution merit your attention; *beware of false prophets who come to you in sheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* The man who would persuade you that religion is calculated to enslave the free born mind, and atheism the only basis of independence; that a spirit of jealousy is necessary to support a republican government, that France is a friend to the rights of mankind in general, or of America in particular; that the venerable character who presides over these States, is either ignorant of, or unfriendly to their interests, and that WASHINGTON is betraying the country he so gloriously preserved from ruin at the hazard of life, and by the sacrifice of every domestic comfort, of men, who would possess you of such sentiments, beware. They are destroyers of your good. It would be unjust indeed to attach the odious epithet of sinner to all who advocate such political opinions—many doubtless who are real friends to the interests of their country, are led astray, *by the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive,* but the prevalence of such principles will assuredly reduce us to a level with those unhappy nations, from whom we are now so gloriously distinguished.

O my countrymen! can you endure to see the rising glories of America erased, and the beautiful fabric which you have erected at such expence sinking into ruins? will you renounce that God who has been so remarkably the God, and Benefactor of America, for the vain phantom of philosophy; and abjure your religion, that precious boon, for which our pious ancestors preferred a dreary wilderness, to all the delights of cultivated Europe? Will you servilely bow the neck to a foreign yoke, and give up your dear posterity to the fraternal embraces of Frenchmen?

To

(3)

To consent to sin, is virtually to consent to this ; for in something thus reproachful, thus deplorable will sin end. We have no enemy to fear but sin. The united powers of earth and hell cannot wrest from us these important priviledges, until by our own folly and wickedness, we have thrown down our guard. The perfections of the Supreme Disposer assure us, that he will not withdraw the blessings his goodness has bestowed, unless our prevailing iniquities render such a dispensation necessary.

Rouse then, my countrymen, from your slumbers, and seize the moment of salvation—fly from sin as from destruction and death—fear God and keep his commandments.—Let not the arts of infidelity rob you of your religion—bind to your hearts that dearest gift of indulgent heaven—beware of the allurements of luxury—deal not in bribing gold—cultivate the humble, domestic virtues—pursue useful knowledge—by instruction and discipline—endeavor to form the minds of your children to the habits of virtue—let not the contracted views of self-interest blind you to the more weighty concerns of your country, nor tempt you to withdraw your support from religion—remember with gratitude your benefactors—let not the important privilege of choosing your own rulers be, “as a price in the hand of a fool, who has no heart to improve it”—weigh the importance of choosing not only able men, but those who fear God, and regard his oath—having chosen such, let them have your confidence ; revere them as the ministers of God, and be in subjection not only for wrath, but for conscience sake. In this, and in no other way can we reasonably expect to enjoy the continuance of our civil and religious priviledges, transmit them to remote posterity ; and hope for the plaudit of our Judge.

9. 7. 48



TO THE
HONORABLE
MEMBERS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF THE PROVINCE OF
NEW SOUTH WALES
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED
I HAVE THE HONOR TO
ACKNOWLEDGE THE RECEIPT
OF YOUR LETTER OF THE
11th INSTANT, AND TO
ADVISE YOU THAT THE
SAME HAS BEEN
FORWARDED TO THE
RELEVANT DEPARTMENT
FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION.
Yours faithfully,
J. H. [Signature]